

South Dakota National Guard

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SD Soldier's leadership style gains national recognition

By Sgt. 1st Class Theanne Herrmann
SDNG Public Affairs Office

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The U.S. Army announced that a South Dakota Army National Guard warrant officer will receive the General Douglas MacArthur leadership award, during a May 29 ceremony at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia.

Warrant Officer Kenneth Podzimek, of Wagner, a construction engineer technician in the 155th Engineer Company is the first SDARNG warrant officer to receive the award.

The U.S. Army awards one warrant officer and six officers annually, from the active duty component, the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard, who demonstrate the ideals for which General MacArthur stood – duty, honor and country.

“When I found out that one warrant officer in the entire National Guard would be selected, I figured my chance of winning this award were slim to none,” said Podzimek. “When I read the list of award winners and saw my name... I had to read it about three to four more times. I couldn't believe it.”

To be chosen among so many great warrant officers and to receive this award is a humbling experience, he said.

Just one example of Podzimek's effective leadership style was demonstrated when the 155th suffered the loss of a Soldier, said Lt. Col. David Dailey, 153rd Engineer Battalion commander.

“He led from the front, took the time to talk to his Soldiers individually and mentored them through a very difficult time,” said Dailey. “He has been an instrumental leader, using his abilities to mentor his subordinates to become a cohesive and resilient platoon.”

Podzimek's technical knowledge shined when he managed more than four construction projects and his team responded to the flood operations in southeast South Dakota and the tornado clean up for the Wessington Springs community, said Dailey.

“He always makes an extraordinary effort to ensure his company is able to accomplish any mission,” said Dailey. “His dedication and integrity to the mission first, epitomizes the ideals for which this award stands for.”

His leadership style is a direct reflection of his former leaders in the SDARNG, said Podzimek.

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“I’ve had the luxury of having good leaders throughout my military career,” he said. “They’ve taught me to do more than the work of a commander, to get your hands dirty and do some manual labor right alongside your Soldiers.”

Outside of his National Guard commitment, Podzimek balances duties as a full-time electrician for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and an owner of a part-time cooling and heating business.

“He maintains a full schedule with his civilian and military obligations but always finds time to remain active in his community and spend time with his family,” said Dailey.

Podzimek is active in his community, volunteering his time and resources to his local fire department and VFW Post 7319.

“His willingness to give back to his community through volunteering his time to local organizations directly reflects his values,” Dailey said. “He is a top notch leader with unlimited potential that, without a doubt, has earned him the distinction of being recognized as the General Douglas Leadership award recipient.”

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150326-Z-ZZZ99-001: U.S. Army Warrant Officer Kenneth Podzimek, South Dakota Army National Guard 155th Engineer Company is a General Douglas MacArthur’s leadership award recipient. The U.S. Army announced the winners March 15, 2015, listing six officers and one warrant officer recipient from the National Guard. The award recognizes company grade officers who demonstrate the ideals for which General MacArthur stood – duty, honor and country. (U.S. Army South Dakota National Guard file photo)

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